

**Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of)	
)	
Numbering Resource Authorization)	CC Docket No. 99-200
)	

ORDER

Adopted: April 22, 2020

Released: April 22, 2020

By the Chief, Wireline Competition Bureau:

1. In this Order, the Wireline Competition Bureau (Bureau) temporarily waives one of the Commission’s numbering rules in order to assist businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, we grant Verizon’s petition for limited waiver of the maximum 180-day period for maintaining wireless telephone numbers in “reserved” status for certain business customers.¹ Under section 52.15(f)(1)(vi) of the Commission’s rules, reserved numbers “are numbers that are held by service providers at the request of specific end users or customers for their future use” but does not include “[n]umbers held for specific end users or customers for more than 180 days.”² In light of the circumstances presented by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we extend the 180-day time period that numbers may be held in “reserved status” by service providers at the request of business customers for their future use to 360 days and we do so for wireless numbers placed or maintained in reserved status from the date of this Order to September 30, 2020. As a result, businesses impacted by the pandemic that have suspended operations will be able to retain their existing mobile wireless telephone numbers until their operations resume without imposing additional financial disruption due to disconnection or reactivation fees or imposing associated billing inconveniences.

2. Generally, the Commission’s rules may be waived for good cause shown.³ The Commission may exercise its discretion to waive a rule where the particular facts would render strict compliance inconsistent with the public interest.⁴ In addition, the Commission may take into account considerations of hardship, equity, or more effective implementation of overall policy on an overall basis.⁵ As Verizon explains in its petition, “[d]ue to COVID-19, many business customers with numbers approaching the 180-day limit that would ordinarily re-activate their reserved numbers in the next few months may have little or no reason to do so.”⁶ In particular, Verizon explains that “businesses in the service and recreation industries that operate annually from early spring through the fall may be unable to

¹ Verizon, Petition for Limited Waiver, Numbering Resource Optimization, WC Docket No. 99-200 (filed Apr. 9, 2020) (Verizon Petition).

² 47 CFR § 52.15(f)(1)(vi).

³ 47 CFR § 1.3 (providing that “[a]ny provision of the rules may be waived by the Commission on its own motion or on petition if good cause therefore is shown”).

⁴ *Northeast Cellular Telephone Co. v. FCC*, 897 F.2d 1164, 1166 (D.C. Cir. 1990).

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ Verizon Waiver Petition at 2.

open for business in 2020 for weeks or months later than normal—if at all.”⁷ Likewise, “a business that has not yet suspended service but now is in economic distress may want to suspend the number but not be ready to reactive service within 180 days given the uncertain duration and impact of the pandemic.”⁸

3. Under these circumstances, we find good cause to temporarily waive the 180-day limit on maintaining numbers in reserved status. As the Bureau has stated “[d]uring the coronavirus pandemic, we believe that all communications service providers . . . must prioritize helping their subscribers with getting connected and staying connected to voice and broadband services.”⁹ We agree with Verizon that a temporary, limited waiver of section 52.15(f)(1)(vi) will serve the public interest objective of “minimizing billing, service disconnection, and related burdens on business customers as they plan for and seek to recover from the devastating economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic,”¹⁰ and is therefore warranted. As Verizon explains, the relief granted by this waiver will ensure that business customers are “able to retain the familiar numbers they depend on, even though there may not be a need to use that number for a significant period of time”¹¹ as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which “has upended, to an unprecedented degree, consumers’ and businesses’ usage patterns and severely restricted when and where companies are able to do business.”¹² This waiver applies to all wireless telephone numbers of business accounts placed or maintained in reserved status between the date of this Order and September 30, 2020. For all numbers covered by this waiver, the typical 180-day period that numbers can be held in reserve by service providers at the request of customers for their future use is now 360 days.

4. Accordingly, IT IS ORDERED, pursuant to sections 4(i) and 251(e) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, 47 U.S.C. §§ 154(i), 251(e), and sections 0.291 and 1.3 of the Commission’s rules, 47 CFR §§ 0.291, 1.3, that the Verizon Petition IS GRANTED and section 52.15(f)(1)(vi), 47 CFR § 52.15(f)(1)(vi), IS WAIVED to the extent herein described herein.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Kris A. Monteith
Chief
Wireline Competition Bureau

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.* at 2.

⁹ See *Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization*, Order, WC Docket No. 11-42, DA 20-285, para. 8 (WCB 2020).

¹⁰ Verizon Waiver Petition at 1.

¹¹ *Id.* at 5.

¹² *Id.* at 3.